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**PRESIDENTIAL PROCLAMATION NO. 21-311**

*"Expressing Utmost Gratitude and Deep Sadness on the Passing of the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons and Conveying the Appreciation of a Grateful Nation for his Contributions to the People of the Republic of Palau, and ordering all flags of the Republic of Palau be flown at half-mast in his honor."*

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was born on January 14, 1944, to his mother, the late Maria Gibbon Merep and his father, the late Sintau Wong; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons' matrilineal lineage is the Techeboet Clan of Idid, the highest-ranking clan of Koror; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons began his educational pursuit at Seventh Day Adventist Elementary School, followed by Emmaus High School, before graduating from SDA Mission Academy in 1965. He continued at the Guam Trade School, then the University of Guam before enlisting in the US Army, serving for six (6) years, from 1967 to 1973; and

**WHEREAS**, in 1972, while in the military, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons received news of his uncle's passing – the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Ngoriakl, who succumbed to his illness while undergoing medical treatment in Japan in 1972; and

**WHEREAS**, at the request of his clan, the Palau Legislature adopted a resolution petitioning the United States government to release the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons from the US Army; and

**WHEREAS**, thus the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons returned home, where by birthright, he assumed the title of Paramount High Chief Ibedul of Koror, becoming, at 29, the youngest holder of the title in the history of Koror; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was the Chairman of the Council of Chiefs (Rubekul Belau), the constitutionally appointed advisory group to the President on matters concerning traditional law, customs, and their relationship to the Constitution and laws of the Republic; and



**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was the head of Bital Yanged (with jurisdiction over 10 states), while Paramount High Chief Reklai Raphael B. Ngirmang is the head of Bital Yanged, and the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was also the head of Ngara Meketii and Rubekul Kldeu; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons hosted the first Pacific Chiefs Meeting in the early 1980s, and his special guest was King Tupou IV of Tonga; and in 2005, he hosted the Third Micronesian Traditional Leaders Conference; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was also selected Mayor of Koror shortly following his ascension to the paramount high chief position; and

**WHEREAS**, during the turbulent 1980s, with a nation attempting to establish its political future, resulting in injuries and deaths amid public chaos, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons, with other leaders, utilized his traditional and political responsibilities to unite the people and government, averting further civil unrest; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons joined the leadership of the Palau People's Committee whose endorsement and influence resulted in the ratification of the Palau Constitution – at the time, the only constitution in the world with a nuclear-free provision; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was a strong advocate for Palau's independence, traveling to Honolulu, Hawaii as a member of the Palau Political Status Commission to negotiate relations with the United States; and

**WHEREAS**, as Chairman of the Koror State Public Lands Authority, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons, rallied other chiefs of Palau to lobby the US government for the return of all public lands to Koror and the other states; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was also instrumental in opposing a proposed Super Port project in Palau waters for storing and transshipment of oil to other countries; and

**WHEREAS**, for his efforts, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was awarded the *Right Livelihood Award* which he received at a ceremony in Stockholm, Sweden in 1984; after which he traveled to England where he visited the tomb of Lebuu, the son of the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Tlotongang; and





**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was a successful entrepreneur who helped pioneer Palau's hospitality industry, and was one of the organizers who helped establish the Eurasia Pacific Shipping Line linking Manila, Cebu, Hong Kong, Republic of China (Taiwan), Yap and Palau that helped ensure the delivery of food and other necessities in the region; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons recognized the value of Palau's natural resources (*lukel a klengar*) and tirelessly endeavored to protect these national treasures; he also championed the preservation of Palau's rich and unique culture and traditions. He additionally advocated for increased educational opportunities for Palauan students, encouraging them to obtain the skills necessary to lead the country forward; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was instrumental in the development of Dolphins Pacific, the world's largest facility of its kind, which emphasizes environmental stewardship, serves as a major visitors' attraction, and provides a venue for interaction between dolphins and people with disabilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons organized the Boy Scouts in Palau under the Aloha Boy Scouts of America and proudly wore the *Beavers Award*; and

**WHEREAS**, due to his wisdom, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was included in delegations, headed by the various Presidents of the Republic of Palau, to attend numerous high-level bilateral and multilateral meetings internationally; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons gave generously to those seeking his assistance with money, food, and land issues; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was a major donor to the annual Mechesil Belau Conference, whose mission is to advocate for the strengthening of Palauan culture and traditions; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was a man of strong faith. He was on the committee that built the present-day SDA Church, was an active member of the SDA Church Board, the head of the Men's Ministry Activities, and a prominent donor to his church; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons will long be remembered as a leader who served his people and nation with respect, dignity, and humility, both in his public responsibilities and private affairs; and



**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was called to his eternal rest on November 4, 2021, in Taipei, Republic of China (Taiwan), at the age of 77; and

**WHEREAS**, at the time of his untimely passing the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons was the longest serving head of the Palau Council of Chiefs, having led the council for 40 years; and

**WHEREAS**, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons is survived by his wife Maricar Garcia Paulino Gibbons; siblings, Bilung Glora G. Salii and Rechucher-ra-Techekii Alexander Merep; children, Sam Scott, Jim Scott, Darrel Gibbons, Lee Boo Riley Gibbons, Nicole Ngerdokou Gibbons Field, Yutaka Gibbons, Jr., Kenny Gibbons Reklai, Ilengelekei Derek Gibbons, Louch Gibbons, Wanda Omengkar, Ke'ala Ngeanges Gibbons, Sebalt Gibbons, Maria Helen Lyman Gibbons O'Dell, Metawii Terilyn Gibbons, Taldil Shizuka Gibbons, J'Mina Taru Paulino Gibbons, Dilbtuch Alexis Paulino Gibbons, and Kerbil Paulino Gibbons; and his many grandchildren, family members, relatives and friends; and

**NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the people of the Republic of Palau express deep sadness for the passing of this extraordinary citizen, the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons, and further pay tribute to his long and distinguished service to his family, clan, community, and the people of the Republic of Palau; and

**NOW, THEREFORE**, by virtue of the authority vested in me under the Constitution and laws of the Republic of Palau, and specifically 1 PNC, Section 503(c), I, Surangel S. Whipps, Jr., President of the Republic of Palau, hereby proclaim that as a display of the respect that his country and his fellow citizens have for the late Paramount High Chief Ibedul Yutaka M. Gibbons, all flags regularly flown within the jurisdiction of Palau, and all flags of the Republic of Palau flown at the Embassies and Consulates of Palau in other countries, shall be hoisted at half-mast for five days, from November 19 to November 23, the day of his funeral.

**SO PROCLAIMED**, this 18<sup>th</sup> day of November 2021 at the National Capital in Ngerulmud, Republic of Palau.

  
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Surangel S. Whipps, Jr.  
President of the Republic of Palau